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ROSALINE



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BEATRICE BELKNAP

ROSALINE

BY

BEATRICE _{EL} BELKNAP



L A N S I N G

DEC. 1909

THE
EYEWITNESS

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BY

D. GORDON PRATT

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DEDICATION.

To Rev. Winfield Scott Sly, who has labored so faithfully in the field of religion and temperance, this book is inscribed, by a heart that has been uplifted by his work.

Trusting that these few words will voice, not only the gratitude of the author, but the gratitude alike of the homeless children that he has guarded, of the souls that he has saved, of the many that his influence has redeemed from drink and of his fellow temperance workers.

B. B.

PREFACE.

To the ladies of the W. C. T. U. and other friends, who have made the publishing of my little story possible, I wish to offer my sincere thanks.

THE AUTHOR.

ROSALINE.

PRELUDE.

The Guardian. [A Vision.]

I walked the woodlands, deeply blue,
With sheen of violets spread;
And as I wandered where it led,
I thought the path was one I knew—
I thought I knew the vale ahead
Where countless flowers grew.

And yet they were not May-time flowers,
The flowers that met my sight—for sure
No flowers of earth could hold such lore
Of beauty, passing dreams of ours;
So frail, so fair, so pure
They came from Eden's bowers.

And surely, 'twas no earthly stream
That rippled on in wavelets bright,
But one we dream of in the night;
Which water fields we have not seen—
In everlasting realms of light—
The hills of fadeless green.

ROSALINE

And those bright spirits dwelling there—
Surely they wore no mortal guise;
But rather, Seraphs of the skies,
Diff'reng from us, because they wear
Love, lighting lips and brow, and eyes.
Making their faces fair.

They wandered 'mid the flowers and grass,
Beside the crystal tide.
And all along the vale so wide,
I saw those airy spirits pass;
But there was one, who stood beside
That sea of shimmering glass.

He stood with lovely eyes cast down,
As if some pain that wrung his heart,
Would not at heavens gate depart;
He could not go to claim his crown,
Until that piercing earthly dart,
Should from his soul be drawn.

So my eyes followed where he gazed,
And lo! our own green earth shewed fair,
Beyond that river running there.
And then I saw, with new surprise,
How closely bound, how very near
Our earth is to the skies.

ROSALINE

And can it be, this world of gloom,
Can lie so near that world of light,
And yet not see its visions bright?
I looked, thinking on such sad doom,
A woman—kneeling in our sight—
Was sobbing o'er a tomb.

While evermore her pale lips said,
Voicing her sad heart sore distressed—
“My child is dead! My child is dead!”
And so she bowed her stricken head,
Until it seemed the hand that pressed
Hers kindly, was forgot, and He who led.

That patient One; forever at her side,
Who, all unseen, His arms about her drew
And whispered comfort, all the long night
through.

The shadow of His wing was spreading wide,
To guard her, and to shelter; and the dew
Of His great pity, on her heart was laid.

And when the long day came—
When her eyes sought so oft the vacant chair,
Feeling as if her darling must be there,
And found it empty, and each time the same—
Great wail of bitterness ascended, where
The Christ beside her stood, and heard His name

ROSALINE

Repulsed by her sad heart desparingly;
Unheeding Him, who strove to heal her soul,
And teach her heart to answer, "It is well."
Did He turn from her? That could never be,
For those blest words, once spoke, are ringing
still—
Ringing through time and all eternity.

"Lo! I am always with you: Learn of Me:
Take on My yoke all ye with care oppressed,
Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."
And this through endless years shall ever be
The invitation, to the sad addressed,
By Him, who walked the shores of Galilee.

* * * * *

I knew not that time moved, all seemed the same,
Yet as I watched the woman tread her way,
It seemed, her grief had ceased to fill the day
And night with bitterness, reproach and blame.
The shadow on her life still seemed to stay
But other duties, griefs, and sorrows came.

So years rolled on: yet to her lonely breast
One child remained, to clasp from that sad day,
And baby fingers soothed her grief away.
And when with loving arms, she fondly pressed
The little maid, or watched her at her play,
Her life took on a newer, sweeter zest.

ROSALINE

So day by day, the heart strings of her life
Were woven round that child of airy joy,
Through the bright years that ever seemed to fly,
On wings apart from all the world's sad strife;
Changing the child into the maiden coy,
Standing white footed by the sea of life.

And he, whose life so bright and fair,
Was in the city built above,
Held for the child a brother's love;
Keeping a heavenly vigil, where
Mother and sister slow did move,
Along their pathway there.

And day by day, the maiden grew,
Nor knew what heavenly watch was kept,
While she was waking, while she slept,
Over her every step, nor knew
Each smile she gave, each tear she wept
Was known to her watcher, too.

ROSALINE

CANTO FIRST.

Over New England's sunny hills,
The spring wind softly stirred;
Bearing the music of laughing rills,
Wafting a few sweet notes and trills,
From the song of some spring bird.

Through the wide windows, into the church,
It brought the music of bird and rill—
Twittering sparrows, lowing cows,
Rustling leaves, where wild bees house,
And bleating of sheep on the hill.

Along the country road were spread
Clusters of wild flowers, sweet and fair,
Lifting their heads and smiling up
At the sun that kissed each tiny cup
That glowed in the morning air.

All was still, in the house of God,
Save the ministers deep-toned prayer;
Like some soul, pleading through the gloom,
It echoed over the silent room
And the heads of the worshipers kneeling there.



M.H.P

"He seemed to see her figure move
Through the enchanted meadows, as so oft
He had beheld her."

ROSALINE

Echoed and thrilled the silence through,
A message to those plain country folks,
Till even the coldest heart that heard
Those thrilling words, was touched and stirred,
Till the deeper spirit within, awoke.

And was it strange, that the beautiful face
Of an ardent worshiper, shone with tears
Of joy, and emotion, at his prayer
When souls awake to tremble there—
That had not been stirred for years?

When the prayer was over the minister rose
And stood for a moment, looking down,
With eyes that shone with a wondrous light,
Beneath his forehead high and white,
And his clustering locks of brown.

Young he was, and a boyish mien,
Lurked in the lines of firm and feces;
Yet wari and manner suggested more,
Than the tranquil outward mien he bore,
And spoke of a spirit filled with grace.

He stood for a moment, looking down
At the waiting faces raised to him,
And for the briefest space, he glanced
To the corner where the sunbeams danced
On a white arm curved and slim.

ROSALINE

For the briefest space, his grave glance lingered
On the drooping head, with its golden hair:
On the perfect beauty of eyes and lips
Half hid by pearly finger tips.
As she bowed her head in her white palm there—

Thinking, she was so pure and fair,
And, as he stepped again to his place,
In his earnest eyes was a wistful look,
As he turned the leaves of the sacred book,
For there was something in her face,

That lifted his thoughts to God and Heaven,
Yet made him think, with half a sigh,
"If but these people were blest with her
Sweet spirit, to guide as their minister,
Instead of one as weak as I."

"Yet though misshapen, poor and mean,
The vessel be," thus his thought ran—
"Christ can fill up with waters bright."
Then not in his own, but in Jesus' might,
The minister began.

"I hear a voice within the wilderness,
That cries, and cries through all the echoing past,
'Make straight, oh sons of men, the narrow way:
Bring hearts of meet repentance, for the day
Of Jesus' reign, has dawned on earth at last.'

ROSALINE

"My friends, that soul awakening cry,
Through, and across the world has gone,
Till now, with new joy shall increase
That call of love, and hope, and peace,
Till every soul on earth, be drawn

"To Him, Who gave for us His life;
And listening to His dear commands,
Learn to wash out—with toil and pain—
Each secret sin, and secret shame,
And blood from guilty hands.

"And shall we come with empty hands,
Yet hope our heavenly home to win,
While, in the pathway where we go,
Are brothers, sisters, moaning low
In the despair of sin?

"Shall we stand helplessly aside,
While want and vice walk hand in hand
Deaf to humanity's despairing cry,
Knowing their misery is caused, by
Intemperance in our land!

"It holds the nation in its grasp,
And crushes out sweet human lives,
Until the heart must needs o'er-flow,
With the despair, and pain, and woe,
Of drunkards' babes and wives.

ROSALINE

"I seem to see their tears today,
Flowing like some dark mighty river;
The tears of mother, and wife and child,
Bearing out hope, on its current wild—
Out of their lives forever.

"I seem to see a ceaseless stream
Of mankind, marching to their doom;
Young lads, with gay flushed faces fair,
And men, with the dark word, despair,
In characters of gloom

"Flung on their faces, where the trace
Of manhood, seems to be extinct.
They come, the husbands, brothers, sons,
Red with the blood of darling ones,
Down to the chasms' brink.

"I know, I speak to temperate men,
Who take no glass, however small;
Who give advice, to lead the way,
Give their example day by day;
But have you given *all*?

"My brothers, *Did you give your VOTE?*
Or did you press Hells burning cup
Unto your brothers' lips, that you
Might—to your early training true—
Still keep your fathers' party up.

ROSALINE

"In licensing the liquor trade,
You share the liquor dealer's blot;
And *dare you share it*, knowing how,
The voice of Wisdom, says that thou
Shalt touch not, taste not, handle not?

"Think you not, then, your brothers blood
Will yet be counted to your cost.
If putting back the cup of woe
You gave it unto him, and lo—
You tempted him, and he was lost?

"And shall you at God's judgment bar,
Be counted innocent of guilt
If touching, tasting not, you laid
Your seal, upon the damning trade
Wherewith your brothers' blood was spilt?

"Oh brothers! shall we stop at this—
This half compliance to God's call—
Or shall we give our *votes* our *LIVES*
Like men and Christians: Shall we rise—
Rise in our manhood and give *all*?

"And you, my sisters, we need you;
Though your fair hands no vote may have,
Still rests within your fingers white
The power to lead men to the right;
The power to lift; the power to save.

ROSALINE

"Oh mothers teach each child to shun
The cup, that only death doth bring,
That sparkles, while it bears a blight,
And hides beneath its bubbles bright
A serpents deadly sting.

"And most, oh maidens, I charge you;
Make it the purpose of your lives—
No matter what else fortune brings
Or where love's dove may rest her wings—
That ye be not drunkards' wives.

"Let no affection blind your eyes;
No matter what your lover thinks;
No matter how he pleads, that he
Will never love drink more than thee—
Wed thou no man that drinks.

"Frame in your minds, the sage advice,
That shall be as advice divine:
Lovers may come and argue much;
But say, 'The lips that liquor touch,
Shall never touch with mine.'

"Dear friends, in closing let me say,
That, whether short, or whether long—
The time, we struggle with this foe—
The liquor trade, must surely go,
And free our land from wrong.

ROSALINE

"And till that blessed time shall come,
Oh, let us follow where Christ trod;
Fighting the battle in His name,
Making each prayer, each hope, each aim,
For country, and for God."

The sermon o'er, the people rose,
And sweetly swelled their voices there—
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow"—
They echoed through the vales below,
And thrilled the morning air.

And then the minister came down,
And by the doorway took his stand;
And as their outward way they took,
A kindly word to each he spoke,
And warmly shook each hand.

Then through the peaceful summer morn,
They sought their homes among the hills;
And each one with a kindly thought,
For the high thoughts and kind deeds wrought,
By their pastor, Ernest Mills.

And when they all, at last, were gone,
And drawn the blinds, and closed the door,
He wandered out upon the road,
Pausing to pluck the flowers that glowed
The church yard fence before.

ROSALINE

Then wandered on with half a smile,
Speaking his musing thoughts aloud,
As if he did not think to fear
That some small, saucy wind, might hear
And whisper to the flowers—that bowed

Their smiling faces by the way—
The secret, he but meant to lend
To the white violets, and blue,
That, plucked from where they lowly grew,
He held within his han'l.

"How wonderful; how wonderful," he said,
"That God should make a world so bright,
Filled with such wealth by sea and land,
And render to a human hand,
The keys of its delight.

"Should make so beautiful a life,
Lit with a spirit so divine,
And then should render unto me—
Who hath so little worth—the key
Of that dear heart, as mine.

"And yet I know she loves me;
For who could fail to understand
The sweet shy blush of sudden shame—
That to her face this morning came—
When I, a moment, held her hand.

ROSALINE

"I love her, yet I fear to speak
And claim what I so gladly would;
For what have I to offer her,
Who is so beautiful and fair,
To make my suit seem good.

"Unless, indeed, a true heart's love
Requite for riches unpossessed.
This much, at least, I her could give—
Of what I am, and what I have,
The noblest and the best."

And thus his pensive thoughts ran on,
Until at last he left the road—
With its long fringe of budding trees
That whispered softly in the breeze—
And crossed the lawn where he abode,

To pause a moment at the door—
Still half lost in the tender dream,
His fancy painted, of his love—
Then turned, and entering, was told,
A guest awaited him.

With rapid steps he gained his room,
But drew back, when he swung the door,
With an exclamation of surprise,
At the strange sight that met his eyes;
His visitor lay upon the floor,

ROSALINE

While from his white lips half apart,
His life blood flowed in rapid tide,
That stained the grizzled beard that grew
About his face, a crimson hue,
Until his ragged clothes were dyed.

Greatly alarmed, the minister
Cared for his suffering guest.
And then a messenger he sought,
Asking a doctor shoud be brought,
And with the utmost haste.

Again returning to his room
He found the stranger, whom he had
Feared dead, had gained his consciousness
By those simple, helpful, means of his
Without the doctoors aid.

And now upon his elbow leaning,
He stared at him with bloodshot eyes
That wore a look of haunted fear;
And when the minister drew near,
He struggled to arise—

And failing—shrank amid the clothes,
While in a weak voice crying—
“I beg by heavens’ mercy, Sir,
If you come as an officer,
Don’t take me for I’m dying.”

ROSALINE

"Brother"—and Ernest Mills knelt down
And took his trembling hand—
"Fear not! no officer is here.
Be strong my brother, have good cheer,
And know I am your friend."

A while the wild eyes searched his face,
While to a lower accent fell
The voice that had been strained by fear.
"You are the minister that's here?
Then listen for I've much to tell."

Again upon his elbow raised,
He gasped awhile for breath:
"I have a message you must take,
And a confession I must make,
And I am close to death."

"Make not to me but unto God,
Confession of your sin.
I will pray for you, while you live,
But His the office to forgive,
And let repentant sinners in—

"To the dear blessing of his love"—
"Wait, when you've heard what I've to say,
It won't be hard for you to see
That God has got no use for me;
And I no use to pray.

ROSALINE

"I've gone to the devil, body and soul.
Every man's soul has a price they say:
But the price of mine was rather small—
If you could call it a price at all—
Only a drink on a holiday.

"I once had a wife, and a little girl,
And a beautiful noble son;
But I took the drink that the tempter gave,
And by that drink, became a slave,
And he stamped me for one of his own.

"It is easy to see how I went down,
When once the danger line was crossed:
From what I was, to what I am,
With the words written to my name,
Lost! lost! forever lost."

It seemed to Ernest Mills, that he
Had never seen such depth of sin,
And misery, and despair before,
As in those moments, till the door
Swung wide, and Dr. Hume came in.

A young man, Hume, and rather dark,
With flashing eyes and raven hair,
And rapid, nervous style, that made
Sharp contrast, to the manner staid,
Of Mills, as they talked there.

ROSALINE

Yet though so different, they were friends,
And closely bound together,
By ties of love, as plainly showed,
By the doctor's talk, which snapped and glowed,
Like fires in windy weather.

"Ernest!" he said, "I had a scare.
That boy you sent was such a dunce.
With the best guessing I could do
He made me understand t'was you:
You may believe, I came at once.

"As for this man, he has no chance;
I don't hide truth. You picked him up
Sick, somewhere did you? He's broke down:
And with his constitution gone,
There isn't any hope."

He stood and with long fingers drummed
Upon the oaken stand.
While Mills, returning to the bed
Tried to efface what he had said,
And gently took the poor man's hand,

Saying, If further he would speak,
The doctor was a friend most close,
Who could be trusted. "Let him stay."
The sick man answered, "Any way
It does not matter now, who knows,

ROSALINE

"How far that tempter's first vile glass,
The price was paid in full;
Paid by a fair life's golden sands,
Paid by the blood that's on my hands,
And guilt that's on my soul.

"My little girl was three years old;
My boy was seventeen.
And I had loved children and wife,
Better, far better than my life,
Till drink came in between."

He faltered and his breath came fast
His accents to a whisper sank.

"For fifteen years I've shunned this spot
Because that noble son I shot
Crazed by the liquor that I drank.

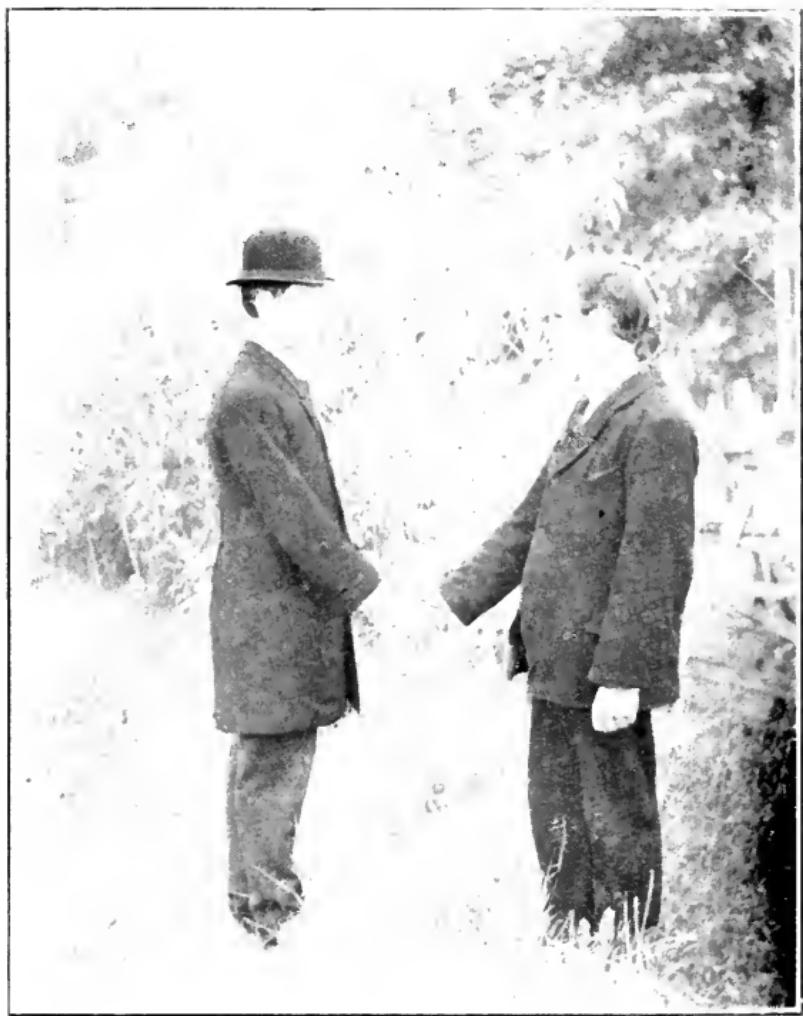
"We quarreled. He wanted me to step
Bartering my soul—Oh God in heaven!
Can this be death that clasps me now,
With its cold fingers on my brow?
Dying! and unforgiven!

"And did I cry to God? But no;
I have but one request to make,
Before I go to that dark tomb
That holds not rest, but endless gloom,
This message you must take—

ROSALINE

"To Mrs. Winthrop Allison.
Say to her only this.
That he, who as a murderer fled
To coward exile, now is dead.
Dead as that honored name of his.

"Dead as that name, and as his soul"—
And as his own doom he had said,
The words of hoarse confession died.
And when the doctor reached his side,
He found that he was dead.



"Long they stood,
hand clasped in hand."

ROSALINE

PRELUDE TO CANTO SECOND.

The Guardian. [Second Vision.]

Somehow a soul had wandered far,
Far from the path that leads to light.
Giddily wandered, where the shades of care
Were gathered dark, to fill it with despair.
While in that city bright

A sweet fair spirit, held the open book
Of his life story, through its pages dim,
Writing the words of fate, that nevermore
Should know recall. And from that fair blest
shore,
Unceasingly, a voice was calling him.

Calling forever, through the gulf between,
And through the vale of pain and sin;
Seeking to win his wayward heart.
Calling, and calling him—"Oh thou who art
A child of God—Return, return to Him!"

And can a man return to God,
Whose guilty hands a crime has done?
Shall he who seeks the Father's grace—
Imploring for a servant's place—
Be called a much loved son?

ROSALINE

I think so: Through the realm of space
There is no spirit so unknown—
Through all the circling ages wild,
No soul—but God has called His child,
And numbered as his own.

CANTO SECOND.

Ten days had passed, and morning beam
Had scarcely dimmed the stars of night
When the minister arose;
He could not sleep for the wild glad song
A robin sang to the breaking light.

So at his window he musing stood
Looking out, over the dewy land
Softly tinted with light and shade,
As if the world were newly made,
And beautiful, from the Maker's hand.

He could see the church at the turn of the road,
And the grave yard on the hill,
What strange black shadows the white stones
cast,
Or did some one stand by the new made grave,
Herself like a shadow, black and still.

ROSALINE

Quietly, through the path he went—
He could not leave her there alone—
And stood beside her. “Mrs. Allison,”
He faltered, and could say no more,
Her sorrow seemed so much his own.

And oh so doubly weak, his words,
He felt would be, her grief to heal;
So he stood silent there until
She lifted her calm face, and said,
“Kind friend it comforts me to feel

Your generous sympathy; and yet,
Grieve not for me, though strong and wild
The tempest through lifes stormy night
God’s tender love is still the light
Which guides my spirit. And my child

“Knows not this is her father’s grave,
For I have hidden from her eyes
This sorrow. Long since I became
Reconciled to all the grief, and shame.
That in the sad past lies.

“Oh, not without rebellion was my soul
Toward life, that left me blind to grope,
Until I learned—grief’s peak upon—
To wait for God’s good time to dawn,
In faith, and love, and hope.”

ROSALINE

In reverence to her spirit calm—
So full of peace and grace—
The minister, upon his knees
Knelt down, and took her hand in his,
And pressed it to his face.

Saying, "Your life has been so sad
Can I, in ought atone?
I love your daughter. Let me care
For her, and your sad pathway cheer,
And be to you a son."

Kindly she spoke. "Let not my grief
O'er shadow her or you."
She stroked the brown hair of his head;
"Take her you love, my boy" she said,
"And take my blessing too."

When she was gone, he lingered there,
Feeling, that trees and flowers, though dumb,
Were answering voices to his heart.
For when to natures child, some great
Sorrow, or joy doth come

Only alone in her great solitudes
Is solace to be found and rest.
And unto her he goes in confidence,
To tell his joy, as might some little child
Seek sympathy upon a mother's breast.

ROSALINE

"Herbert!" he cried in startled wonderment.
As he came of a sudden, amid the path,
To where a man was lying prone—
Face downward—whither he had thrown
Himself upon the grass.

The doctor heard his voice, and started up,
With hot flushed face, and wildly rumpled hair.
"Ernest!" he gasped in shame faced way,
Then plucked a budding blossom spray,
With feigned nonchalance in his air.

"You startled me," he said, with nervous laugh:
"Natures so lovely at this time of year"—
He glanced, with an unseeing eye,
At budding trees and shining sky—
"I was lured to have a day dream here."

Yet anything but a dreamy mood,
Seemed mirrored in his air;
His weary eyes, and haggard look,
The while he half abstracted spoke
Of nature's beauties fair.

This his friend noted, while they talked;
Until—alarmed at last—
He laid his hand upon his arm,
And with a sweetly winning charm
In his grave accents, asked,

ROSALINE

"Herbert you seem perturbed today,
What is the matter, are you ill?"
The doctor dropped at once his air
Of half affected debonair,
And stood a moment still—

The while his face grew set and white—
Then with it half averted, said
In a voice, that seemed without expression—
"You remember that dying man's confession?
I am wrecking *my* life as *he* did.

"I would rather have died than tell you this,
Knowing how you despise
The man who is weak enough to drink—
You can only fancy, how I shrink
From bearing, before your eyes,

"My life's one terrible mistake.
I am as good as its slave today."
The doctor did not raise his eyes—
"I know that you are much surprised,
And grieved, by what I say."

Mills stood astounded, by his words.
It seemed impossible to think
The doctor was not going mad.
At last—in much shocked tones—he said,
"Do you mean, *you* are a slave to drink?"

ROSALINE

"I mean just that," he answered, still
With shamed eyes turned aside,
Bowing his head, before the grief,
And wondering tone of disbelief
With which his friend replied.

The doctor's voice was hoarse. He said
"I would far rather died, than faced
The judgment you must pass on me.
It would be hard for you to see
Clearly, the position in which I'm placed.

"Where I, and every doctor's placed,
Is one of peculiarly great temptation.
And the reason for this, is in the fact,
We know how drink, or drugs, will act,
In any trying situation.

"And mind you, when it comes to that--
When one gives up caring for the cost--
Or where his course will lead at length,
And leans on drink, to give him strength--
He's pretty nearly lost.

"God knows, I'm lost already.
Oh blind, blind fool that I have proved!
To take my life, and from me fling
Honor, ambition, everything,
Even the woman that I loved.

ROSALINE

"The fairest gift God ever gave—
Oh Rosaline! my own true love,
Forgive the man who scorned thy tears,
Counting as only girlish fears,
The perils which you warned me of!

"Forgive—forget, his worthless name—
Yes, I have prayed for that, and yet
How wholly dark life's night would be,
Without one guiding star for me,
If she should e'er forget.

"I know she will not, even in church
There have been times when I could see
Her sitting there, her face half hid,
And the tears shining in her eyes,
And knew they were for me.

"But it is over: I have fought and lost
The battle for my soul, and shall sink low
Till even *she* will draw her skirts aside—
Meeting me in the street—nor ever dream
That I am him she loved and trusted so."

There are moments in this vale of ours—
Moments each heart must sometimes see—
When every earthly aid departs,
Leaving the soul alone, to meet
And pass through, its Gethsemane.

ROSALINE

And to the minister, that field,
Graced by the fairest flowers of spring,
Became—as he listened to his friend—
The Calvary, where his cross was set;
The garden of his suffering.

For in a flash, he seemed to see
The whole great struggle. She with spirit brave,
Sending from her the man she loved,
Because he was too weak to rend
The chains, that made of him a slave.

He saw his duty; that he must
Forget himself, and strive to save
This soul, for God, though for all time
His own love should be hopeless made.
And was he then less brave

That, for a moment, in his mind there rose
Trembling in the balance, the deep love
That he had cherished. All his tender dreams
Rose up before him, till again
He seemed to see her figure move

Through the enchanted meadows, as so oft
He had beheld her, or as where
In church she had been kneeling,
So pure and beautiful, her fair head bowed,
With the bright sunbeams falling on her hair.

*

ROSALINE

In thought, he saw himself and Rosaline
Stand, on the two banks of a deep ravine,
And at its foot his friend; and if he strove
To aid him now, that gulf must sever *them*
Till all eternity would roll between.

He saw it all so clearly; but he looked
Beyond his love, down to his friend.
And standing at that chasm's brink—
“Notwithstanding his love for her—
Reached down to him, his hand.”

“There is no burden so supreme,
But God can help us bear
That burden, to the end, and win
The struggle. Are we chained by sin?
Are we sunk in the waves of despair?

“We need but to cry to the Master,
And his loving accents will speak
The ‘Be still,’ that shall mean our salvation:
For He, having suffered temptation,
Can succor the tempted and weak.

“Trust Him. For long since, on the billow,
When the waves were drawing them in,
Men called on His mercy, and He
Heard their cry, and stilled the wild seas,
And so on the billows of sin,

ROSALINE

“When our spirits are sunk in despair
Of ever reaching the land—
Lo! mid the darkness and weakness, and pain,
We may hear the ‘Be still’ of His dear voice
again,
And feel the firm clasp of his hand.

“And think not that *I* will turn from you;
Oh Herbert, ‘tis in moments like this—
Dark moments like this—that our souls should
draw near,
Should be closest, in moments of trial and fear.
And if there be courage and peace

“In my heart, oh not then my office to scorn,
But rejoice, that it should not be lost.
God gave it to me, that unto my friend
The courage, and peace, of my soul I might lend,
In the hour when he needed them most.

“Not now your privilege to despair,
Or mine to scorn. The task
That lies before us, now, is plain.
We must fight on; and we shall win
The conflict if we only ask

ROSALINE

"Of God, who giveth unto all,
With free and bounteous hand.
There is no failing; you must win.
Now is the moment to begin,
And take a manly stand.

"Do not give up the one you love
Seek rather to *deserve* to win
Her love, walking temptation through;
His hand will help you; and I, too,
Will help you all I can."

The Doctor's eyes were swimming. "You can
help,
Help me, I know, to reach His hand;
For I am sinking, I am sore distressed;
Help me to find that shore of perfect rest.
For I am weary, seeking for the land."

He lifted up his dark eyes. "Pray for me"
He said, with white face turned, to where,
Beneath the blossom laden trees,
The minister, upon his knees,
Knelt down, in fervent prayer.

His voice began in accents low—
"My father, help this erring child
Of thine, for he has wandered far
Into the night, without a star
To light the pathway wild.

ROSALINE

"And now, the battle he must fight,
Has grown to an unequal task;
Too great for any one but Thou:
And in my weakness, even now
I come to Thee, and ask

"That through the trials he must face,
Thy strong arm will uphold
One who is near, and dear to me:
Lo! I commend him unto Thee;
Lord, keep him in thy fold."

Silent awhile the doctor stood,
Striving the better to allay
His heart's emotion; then he said,
"I know it was God's hand that led
My steps to you today.

"For you have raised my soul above
Its own weak sin, and pain
To knowledge of a power on high.
Thank you! I will go back and try
Bravely to fill my post again;

"And with His aid I'll conquer."
Long they stood, hand clasped in hand,
Then with firm step, and altered look,
His homeward way the doctor took,
Across the meadows, through the sun-kissed land.

ROSALINE

Where the young lambs were bleating in the fields,
That early flowers clustered in;
And all his spirit seemed to cry, rejoice!
Because within his soul he heard that voice
Which said "Be still," and knew that he could win.

Long time after Dr. Hume
Departed, Ernest Mills
Stood there alone in the fading light,
Watching the shining stars of night,
Gleam out above the hills.

And there he fought the bitter conflict out,
Made his renunciation, buried there
Deep in his loyal heart, his love for her,
Never to be forgotten, or effaced,
Yet to remain unspoken, till, somewhere,

In God's eternity, a time shall come.
When those who sorrow, joy shall find above
And they be comforted who daily mourn,
And hearts that here by hopeless love are torn,
Shall find an answering love.

* * * * *

ROSALINE

The summer bloomed and faded. Autumn came
With its rich harvests. Brightly glowed
The forests. While each hill and plain
Was yellow with a wealth of grain,
And orchards bowed beneath their load.

Yet in the Master's vineyard, there
Had been a greater harvest made,
With which earth's wealth could not compare.
When humbly at the Saviours' feet
The doctor's rich young life was laid.

And now the ransom had been paid
And he had reached the level plain
Of life, where he had worked before,
He could be satisfied no more,
But must keep on again,

Climbing the heights, that in the days
Of sinless youth, he had not trod;
And thus out of his life's mistake,
His faith the stepping stone should make,
That would lead him up to God.

The red October sun was low,
When through the fields the doctor passed;
And lingered in the pathway green
Thinking, with full heart of the scene,
When he had stood there last.



"Wearing the look which only he can gain,
Who, having known the cross of this world's pain
And having stood that trial, bears the trace
Of a diviner love than this world knows."

ROSALINE

And silently within his heart
He thanked his Maker; not alone
For the new peace his life had gained,
But for its suffering as well,
The heights and depths that he had known.

As he stood there, the setting sun
Lit up the land, till golden-rod
And scarlet leaves, and fields of brown
Were gilded with the light, and he
Seemed standing in the smile of God.

Now through the glowing meadows, Rosaline
Came, all unconscious of her lover near,
Until with sudden, sweet surprise,
At the low gate, she raised her eyes,
And met *his*, grave and clear.

In that sudden, silent glance,
Their souls were bared of every fond disguise,
And as the daylight faded, neither stirred,
For there could be no need of any word,
To tell the tender story of their eyes.

At last he put the slender gate aside
And stood beside her, "Rosaline" he said,
"I ask you to forgive me, as God has
Forgiven me, and washed away my sins—
Taught me to love the pathway where *I* led.

ROSALINE

"And now beloved, I come to you;
Not that I am deserving, for I know
How little I am worthy; but my plea,
My only plea, is that I come dear heart—
Because I love you so.

"And oh, because I need you;" his deep voice
Sank low, till she must needs incline
Her head, to catch the accents of his love—
Low as the wind that sighed above—
Faltering, "Trust me Rosaline."

Low were his words, but lower still
The answer that was given.
So only the man beside her, heard,
And the still night wind, that softly stirred,
And the angels that were in Heaven,

The loyal troth that was plighted there,
As they wandered through the twilight hour;
Noting the strange new sweetness, in the lay
A dreamy bird, sang to the dying day,
Breathing the strange new fragrance of each
flower.

* * * * *

ROSALINE

The waves were beating on the rocks
Where the minister had gone, to spend
A few brief weeks of needed rest,
As he one morn walked by the shore,
And read a letter from his friend.

Calmly he read it to the end:
"Dear Ernest" it concluded "You
Must say the words that make her mine."
And the wild answer in his heart
Was, "This I cannot do!"

Yet rather than in aught to mar
His friend's great happiness,
He prayed for courage, till at length
He knew his spirit had gained strength,
Strength to endure, even this.

And ere the autumn came again,
There dawned a lovely summer day,
When all the country folk around,
Together at the church were found,
While birds were singing gay.

Amid the scene of joy, and mirth,
The minister stepped to his place;
Wearing the look which only he can gain
Who having known the cross of this world's pain,
And having stood that trial, bears the trace

ROSALINE

Of a diviner love, than this world knows;
Of greater strength, and deeper sacrifice,
And at the altar, 'mid the flowers perfume—
Stood Rosaline and Herbert Hume,
With clasped hands, and grave downcast eyes.

ROSALINE

PRELUDE TO CANTO THIRD.

The Guardian. [Third Vision.]

I saw the Angel by the sea
That runs the heavenly city through,
Holding a scepter in his hand;
And breathing from that happy land,
A benediction on the two.

He blest them, with his hand upraised,
And eyes of heavenly light
Full of deep peace: Where are the tears,
That spoke his sorrows, grief, and fears—
When he reached that city bright.

Where are they. He was weeping then
Over the sorrows of that day;
And his soul reached that blessed land
Laden with pain. But lo; God's hand
Has wiped his tears away.

ROSALINE

CANTO THIRD.

Summer and winters changing mood,
Snow, and flowers, and springtime rain,
Chase each other round so fast;
And so three years went gliding past,
And it was June again.

And Rosaline and Herbert Hume
Had yearly kept their wedding day,
By a quiet lunch in the garden wide,
With sometimes a few friends beside,
And sometimes only they.

So in the Doctor's garden—
Where the roses were blushing red,
Shedding their perfume on the breeze—
Rosaline waited under the trees,
With snowy table, spread.

Moving about with airy grace,
Arranging, with zealous wifely care,
The lunch, and dishes, now and then
Scattering roses in between;
Turning with questioning glance to where

ROSALINE

Her mother sat, to ask of her
If she thought this, or that, was right;
Or coming fondly to her chair,
To bend her smiling face down—where
Her mother's arms disclosed the white

Soft ruffles of a baby's dress—
To kiss in ecstacies of joy.
Her sleeping baby's dimpled hands,
Or the soft, tangled, sunny strands
Of hair that crowned her tiny boy.

Whose year of lordly, earthly reign,
Had not yet chased from wondering eyes,
Cobwebs of fairy weave, that still
Drew back to dream land, at their will
Orbs blue as summer skies.

And so the summer morning passed
Till Rosaline—impatient of the hours
Her husband had been absent—took
Her way, down to the margin of the brook,
And stood beside the path, among the flowers.

And so he found her, when he came
With his friend, walking arm in arm,
As smiling she held out her hand to them.
The minister held it a moment while he bowed.
In his grave way, that held a charm—

ROSALINE

A subtle something that perchance
Lay in the bright, magnetic smile
That came and lighted up his face,
With unexpected winning grace,
Then slipped away again, the while

You marveled at it; leaving him
With features almost sadly grave.
So it lit up his features then—
Lit them, and left them grave again—
While Rosaline demurely gave

Him welcome. When he let her fingers go
Her husband caught them. Holding both her
hands
He stooped and kissed her; then
Turned to his friend, and met his quiet gaze
With his own brilliant glance.

"I never look up to the sky" he said
"I never make a prayer
But I thank God for having given
To me, this little earthly heaven,
And this sweet woman here."

ROSALINE

"For oh how often, when any soul was faint
And God seemed far away, unreal and dim,
The thought of her—that she believed in me
When I had proven weak so many times—
And of her faith, has led me back to Him."

But Rosaline lifted her eyes. "In spite
Of what Herbert may say, I know, I knew,
Whose hand it was led him to God. And when
I think how much I love him, then I feel
How great the debt is, that I owe to you."

Suddenly to his eyes the quick tears sprang
And glistened. Though the minister
Had not wept for his lost love, he wept now
For the pure joy of hearing her dear lips
Avow that he had served her.

Through that bright mist, he raised his eyes unto
The tender sky above, so blue, so vast;
The trees, the fields, the flowers, in one
Swift glance of gratitude, till they
Rested upon his friends—at last—

In benediction. While he, in his heart,
Made this mute prayer, to the great heart above
Who loves and cares for us: "This hour requites
For all that I have suffered. Keep them so—
Forever more united, in Thy love."

ROSALINE

CONCLUSION.

[Fourth Vision.]

The woods are still and silent grown;
The summer day is done.
I thought I saw, as in a dream,
A ladder, stretching like a beam
Thrown from the setting sun.

And—like the ladder Jacob saw—
I thought, upon its golden bars,
I saw a host of angels bright,
Come from the city of Delight,
That lies among the stars.

I thought I heard, in accents soft
The echoes from that country Good;
But now, through the enchanted trees
I only seem to hear the breeze,
Go whispering through the wood.

Was it heavenly music dying away?
Or, only the maples sighing play—
On the mossy bank, in the sunset's glow—
Amid the woodland blossoms low—
Where I sat to rest today?

ROSALINE

But though the woods are still again,
I know I'll sometimes catch the strain;
The echoes of that rapturous song,
That swells from the celestial throng,
Who tread that heavenly plain.

And sometimes, when the night is still,
Those sweet, glad voices, I shall hear
Across the darkness murmuring low;
And listening then, my soul shall know,
That Angels of our God are near.

DEC 18 1960

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